

What is claimed is:

1. A *Bacillus* bacterium which is modified so that growth inhibition by 6-ethoxypurine is reduced and has inosine-producing ability.

2. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 1, which is a mutant strain derived from a parent strain belonging to the genus *Bacillus* and shows favorable growth as compared with the parent strain when cultured in a medium containing 6-ethoxypurine.

3. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 2, wherein the medium has an ethoxypurine content of 2000 mg/L.

4. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 1, wherein the medium is a solid medium.

5. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 1, wherein when the bacterium is cultured by applying a suspension of the bacterium to a solid medium containing 6-ethoxypurine and a solid medium not containing 6-ethoxypurine, the bacterium shows a relative growth degree of 80 or more, which is defined by the following equation:

Relative growth degree (%) = [colony diameter (mm) observed in the medium containing 6-ethoxypurine]/[colony diameter (mm) observed in the medium not containing 6-ethoxypurine] x 100.

6. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 5, wherein the solid medium containing 6-ethoxypurine has a 6-ethoxypurine content of 2000 mg/L.

7. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 6, wherein the solid medium is a minimal medium.

8. The *Bacillus* bacterium according to claim 1, which is deficient in one or more genes negatively acting on the biosynthesis of inosine or involved in degradation of inosine and selected from a purine operon repressor gene, succinyl-AMP synthase gene and purine nucleoside phosphorylase gene.

9. A method for producing a *Bacillus* bacterium having improved inosine-producing ability, which comprises selecting strains showing favorable growth in a

medium containing 6-ethoxypurine from a population of *Bacillus* bacteria, and selecting a strain showing high inosine-producing ability from the obtained strains.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the population of *Bacillus* bacteria is obtained by subjecting a parent strain belonging to the genus *Bacillus* to a mutagenesis treatment.